

Toolkit for Counselors

Supporting Students in the College
Application Process

Beginning the School Year

- Sort Summer Mail & Organize Office
- Set up calendar for college rep visits
- Check in the SAT/ACT Materials
- Review and update SAT/ACT extended time files.
- Prepare forms for Seniors (Secondary School Report; Student Information Form; samples in Toolkit)
- **Advertise policies for college application, transcripts, letters of recommendation & required forms**
- Update School Profile & Web site
- Review dates for college programs (College Night; Financial Aid Night)
- Register for CSU and UC Counselor Conferences
- Register for ACT and College Board Workshops

Now the Students are Here

- Set up meetings and review with seniors:
 - Policies for the college application process
 - Policy for attending College Rep visits & college visits
 - College application process and UC/CSU applications
 - SAT and ACT testing, registration and requirements
- Prepare for National Merit, National Hispanic, National Achievement
- Keep rep visit calendar updated; include regional college nights
- Review school plans for PSAT and PLAN testing
- Prepare for any Fall evening events as appropriate
- Start interviewing seniors and writing letters of recommendation

Networking – Time Well Spent

- Attend counselor workshops: UC, CSU
- Get to know the College Reps visiting your high school
- Attend College Information Breakfasts

Strategies for Writing Letters of Recommendation

- **Gathering information**
 - The student
 - Parents
 - Teachers and Coaches
 - Files and records
- **Managing the paper work**
 - Use your own secondary school report form
 - Multiple entry record keeping
 - Staying calm when documents disappear

Keeping the Momentum Going

October

- Register students for PSAT and PLAN
- PSAT and PLAN school administration
- Continue interviewing seniors and writing letters of recommendation
- Organize and advertise scholarship information
- Finish National Merit forms
- Complete Secondary School Reports for ED and EA
- Attend counselor workshops: ACT, College Board, Financial Aid
- **Provide application and essay writing workshops**

Value Added Workshops

- Writing the personal statement
 - Who will teach this at your school?
- **UC Application Workshop**
 - Addressing the fears of 1st generation students
 - Solving problems as a group rather than one at a time

- Continue interviewing seniors, writing letters of recommendation & sending secondary school reports
- Continue with College Rep Visits
- Assist with UC/CSU and other applications
- Review mid-semester grades and counsel students regarding grade issues
- Review CSS Profile process with students
- Continue to advertise scholarships

Wrapping up with the Seniors

December

- Conduct Financial Aid workshop
- Organize GPA verification process for CAL Grants
- Complete writing letters of recommendation/secondary school reports
- Organize the distribution of PSAT/PLAN results
- Continue with scholarships

January

- Assist families with financial aid process
- **Plan for sending Mid-Year reports**
- Organize workshop for community college applications
- Additional follow-up with seniors as needed
- Organize and advertise information about summer programs
- Set up Junior meetings
- Review SAT/ACT testing with juniors
- Continue with scholarships
- Respond to missing application materials

February

- **Send out Mid-year reports**
- **Help students follow-up with missing materials**
- Begin Junior meetings
- Conduct evening programs if scheduled (College Night, Sophomore parents)
- Complete EOP applications/forms
- Conduct workshop for community college applications
- Update UC course list
- Review Seniors at risk
- Make sure Cal Grant materials are sent
- Continue with scholarships and summer programs
- Follow-up reports of missing application materials

Preparing the Juniors

- Junior preparation for the counseling appointment
 - Getting to know your students
 - Understanding the parent perspective
- Classroom activities for juniors
 - GPA Game
 - Web Quest

Decision Time for Seniors

March

- Continue college planning with juniors
- Be available to seniors as admissions decisions received
- Remind juniors of ACT/SAT registration
- **Review wait list and UC appeals with seniors**
- Advertise NACAC/WACAC College Fairs
- Register for WACAC conference

- Interpret financial aid award letters and counsel seniors re college choices
- Counsel seniors with wait list options and send supporting documents as appropriate
- Review files of sophomores and juniors for PSAT/SAT/ACT extended time
- Remind students to submit SIRs by May 1
- Continue college planning with juniors
- Continue with scholarship and summer programs

Wrapping Up & Planning Ahead

May

- AP Exams
- Senior exit survey
- Prepare for sending final transcripts to colleges
- Continue with scholarship information
- Senior Awards Night
- **Respect students' privacy when responding to requests for student outcomes**

June

- Coordinate final transcripts to colleges
- Complete ELC process for UCs
- Plan calendar for next year
- Prepare summary college admissions report
- Collect information for update of profile and web site
- Arrange for summer transcript needs
- Attend WACAC conference
- **Celebrate your students' choices!**